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Chairman: Mr. Busacca ..... (Italy)
later: Mr. Wissa (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Egypt)
later: Mr. Busacca (Chairman) ..... (Italy)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Agenda item 110: Elimination of racism and racial discrimination (*continued*) (A/C.3/52/L.31, L.32 and L.38)

Draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.31: Measures to combat contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance

Draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.38: Third decade to combat racism and racial discrimination and the convening of a world conference on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance

1. **Mrs. Msuya** (United Republic of Tanzania), introducing draft resolutions A/C.3/52/L.31 and L.38 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and also on behalf of Mexico and Turkey, said that, while apartheid had been eradicated, other forms of racism still persisted. The two draft resolutions reflected the need for determined action to combat them.

2. Draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.31 commended the report of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and drew attention, in particular, to two worrying new trends highlighted within it, namely, the growing tendency towards institutionalized racism and the misuse of new communication technologies, especially the Internet, to disseminate racist propaganda.

3. Draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.38 reiterated the need for a stronger commitment to the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, and incorporated the recommendation of the Commission on Human Rights regarding the convening of a world conference to combat racism. It was vital that the international community should have a clear picture of problems in those areas and of the most effective means of combating them.

4. She expressed the hope that the two draft resolutions would be adopted by consensus.

Draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.32: Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

5. **Ms. Tomić** (Slovenia) introduced draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.32 on behalf of the original sponsors and Belgium, Croatia, El Salvador, Portugal and Turkmenistan. The draft resolution consisted of two operative parts dealing respectively with the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Committee's financial situation. The latter continued to be a cause of serious concern, and the draft resolution once again urged States parties to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination to expedite ratification of the amendment to the Convention providing for the financing of the Committee from the United Nations' regular budget. She expressed the hope that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

Agenda item 111: Right of peoples to self-determination (*continued*) (A/C.3/52/L.33, L.34 and L.41)

Draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.33: Use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination

6. **Mr. Otuyelu** (Nigeria), introducing draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.33 on behalf of the sponsors, drew attention to the following revisions: in paragraph 6, the words "to invite Governments" should be inserted before "to make proposals", the words "on a clearer legal definition of mercenaries" should be replaced by "towards a clearer definition of mercenaries". The unlawful use of mercenaries had not only persisted, but was also acquiring insidious new forms with links to arms trafficking, terrorism, drug trafficking and other criminal activities. The international community must voice its concern at that situation. He therefore hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus, or by as large a majority as possible.

Draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.34: Universal realization of the right of peoples to self-determination

7. **Mr. Bhatti** (Pakistan), introducing draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.34 on behalf of the sponsors, said that the language was essentially the same as that used in General Assembly resolution 51/84 with a few minor changes. He hoped that the draft resolution, like its predecessor, would be adopted by consensus.

Draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.41: The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination

8. **Mr. Wissa** (Egypt), introducing draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.41 on behalf of the original sponsors and Brunei Darussalam, said that the draft resolution contained a new preambular paragraph which reflected the concern of the international community at the deterioration of the peace process and the failure to implement the agreements signed between the Palestine Liberation Organization and the

Government of Israel. He hoped that it would be adopted by consensus.

Agenda item 112: Human rights questions (*continued*)

(a) Implementation of human rights instruments (*continued*) (A/C.3/52/L.35 and L.37)

Draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.35: "International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families"

9. **Ms. Morgan** (Mexico) introduced draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.35 on behalf of its original sponsors and Cape Verde, Guatemala, Guyana, Nigeria and Yemen.

10. The draft resolution would encourage Governments which had not yet done so to accede to the Convention. The early entry into force of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families would be a major step forward in the protection of human rights. The sponsors hoped that, as in previous years, the Committee would adopt the draft without a vote.

Draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.37: International Covenants on Human Rights

11. **Mr. Wille** (Norway), introducing draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.37 on behalf of the original sponsors and Australia, Hungary, Monaco, New Zealand, Panama and Portugal, made the following revisions to the text: in paragraph 6, before the words "gender perspective", "the" should be replaced by "a", and the words "from States parties" should be inserted after "national reports"; at the end of paragraph 9, the words "and takes note of general comments No. 25 and 26 adopted by the Committee" should be added; and, similarly, at the end of paragraph 10, the words "and takes note of general comments Nos. 6 and 7 adopted by the Committee" should be added. He hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus, as in the past.

12. **Mr. Chang Beom Cho** (Republic of Korea) requested that action on the draft resolution, which was scheduled for the following afternoon, should be postponed to allow additional time for consultation. His delegation was concerned that the draft resolution did not refer to the need to maintain the integrity of the international human rights instruments.

13. **The Chairman** suggested that he should raise the matter with the main sponsor.

Agenda item 108: Promotion and protection of the rights of children (*continued*) (A/C.3/52/L.25 and L.39)

Draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.25: The rights of the child

14. **Mr. Londono** (United States of America) drew attention to document A/C.3/52/L.39, which contained a number of proposed amendments to the draft resolution. While his delegation agreed with the spirit and purpose of the draft resolution, it believed that the amendments were necessary to bring the language used into line with applicable international law.

15. With regard to section IV of the draft resolution, paragraph 1 expressed grave concern at the use of children as combatants, while paragraph 9 urged an end to the use of children as soldiers. Within the United Nations, the term "children" was held to refer to persons under the age of 18. Under international law, however, the minimum age for military service was 15. The United States of America allowed 17-year-olds to enlist voluntarily in the armed forces with parental consent, and many other Member States permitted enlistment at age 15 or 16. While protracted negotiations were under way on an optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child which might raise the minimum age for military service, it would be inappropriate for the General Assembly to prejudge the outcome of those negotiations.

16. The language used in paragraph 14 with respect to sanctions was also inconsistent with applicable international law and failed to reflect the wording adopted by consensus by the Commission on Human Rights.

Agenda item 112: Human rights questions: (*continued*) (A/52/3, 116, 173, A/52/254-S/1997/567, A/52/262, A/52/286-S/1997/647, A/52/301-S/1997/668, A/52/347, 432, 437 and A/52/447-S/1997/775)

(b) Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms (*continued*) (A/52/66, A/52/81-S/1997/153, A/52/85-S/1997/180, A/52/117, A/52/125-S/1997/334, A/52/133-S/1997/348, A/52/134-S/1997/349, A/52/135, 151, 182, 204, 205, 468, 469 and Add.1, 473, 474, 475, 477, 483, 489, 494, 498, 548 and 567)

(c) Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives (*continued*) (A/52/61-S/1997/68, A/52/64, A/52/125-S/1997/334, A/52/170, 472, 476, 479, 484,

A/52/486/Add.1/Corr.1, A/52/490, 493, 497, 499, 502, 505, 506, 510, 515, 522, 527 and 583)

(d) Comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (*continued*) (A/52/36 and 182)

(e) Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (*continued*) (A/52/36 and 182)

17. **Mr. Neiva Tavares** (Brazil) said that the international community currently counted on an important set of mechanisms to monitor human rights violations. Regardless of their possible shortcomings, they were the only authoritative instruments on which the United Nations could rely with a view to redressing situations requiring international attention. His delegation fully supported the work carried out by the treaty bodies and by the special procedures of the Commission on Human Rights.

18. It was regrettable that dialogue with international human rights bodies had sometimes been refused on account of the alleged priority given by the international system to monitoring at the expense of cooperation. His delegation did not conceive of such an opposition between two alternatives. Any kind of cooperation under the aegis of the United Nations must be based on the principles of the universality and interdependence of human rights. The legitimacy of democratic institutions and the political and civil rights that accompanied them hinged very much on a broad-based perception that democracy was also conducive to the improvement of people's standard of living. The international community and Governments must join their efforts to keep up the momentum of what might be called a virtuous circle of democracy, development and respect for human rights. Whenever national resources were insufficient, the international community had the responsibility to provide technical and financial assistance.

19. A comprehensive reform of the present system regarding the presentation of reports to human rights treaty bodies was required. Rationalization should also encompass the task of monitoring human rights. An important step in that direction could be a decision of the appropriate bodies to allow States to consolidate their information in just one or two periodic reports, to be examined accordingly by the various treaty bodies. A comprehensive report would save precious time and resources both at national and international levels.

20. Monitoring mechanisms had helped to lift the veil of secrecy and deceit that frequently shrouded human rights abuses in different parts of the world. Brazil had learned from its own history the importance of international solidarity in the struggle for democracy and human rights, and had achieved a political system based on free elections, freedom of expression and fair competition among political parties. Although political rights and individual liberties were flawlessly respected in Brazil, the Government was aware of obstacles to the enjoyment of other equally basic human rights. A national action plan on human rights launched in 1996 was designed to combat disregard of human rights by means of policies with direct consequences for peoples' day-to-day lives. It had united the Government and civil society with a view to removing obstacles to the realization of human rights.

21. A series of initiatives taken by federal, state and local governments in partnership with civil society had brought about positive changes. Those included the definition of torture as a crime not subject to bail or the statute of limitations, and the establishment of an appropriate penalty for those who committed such an abhorrent crime. The fight against impunity had taken a step forward with the passage of a law whereby military policemen who committed intentional homicides lost the privilege of being judged by their peers in special courts.

22. Despite the laudable rhetoric in international forums, there could be no actual advancement of human rights without their effective exercise. The flame of hope ignited by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights must continue to guide all nations in the pursuit of democracy, development and the realization of the rights to which every individual was entitled. That flame was kept alight by actions to change the real world of abuses and violations. Cooperation with international mechanisms played a pivotal role in the cause of full enjoyment of all categories of human rights.

23. *Mr. Wissa (Egypt), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

24. **Mr. Spirollari** (Albania) drew attention to the situation of human rights in Kosova, which was a matter of deep concern for his Government. He welcomed the Secretary-General's report on the human rights situation in Kosova (A/52/502) and the periodic report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the former Yugoslavia (A/52/490).

25. Since 1991 the Serbian authorities had established a state of emergency in Kosova with systematic repression and gross human rights violations against ethnic Albanians. Despite numerous resolutions of the Security Council and of other international bodies, the situation remained tense and without any sign of improvement. The Special Rapporteur's report described a number of massive human rights violations and continuous discrimination against and

inhuman treatment of ethnic Albanians. It had been reported that, during the first semester of 1997, over 1,900 persons had been subjected to different forms of inhuman and degrading treatment, and that there had been 25 cases of murder, of which two had been due to police torture in custody and 14 had occurred under "unknown circumstances". Fifty-three women and 32 children were reported to have been subjected to police brutality.

26. Despite an agreement reached in 1996, Albanian students were banned from following their studies in their own language. They therefore continued their schooling in private houses and other inappropriate facilities. The students had mounted peaceful protests, to which the Serbian police had responded with brutality.

27. Serbian police continued to loot or confiscate the property of ethnic Albanians in Kosova and to raid Albanian houses under various pretexts. Ethnic Albanians were often arbitrarily detained, taken hostage, subjected to torture, or summoned to police stations without any pretext. Leaders of political parties and local human rights organizations were often taken into custody. Media and specialists using the Albanian language also suffered oppression. Albanians living abroad were not allowed to return to their homes in Kosova.

28. His delegation strongly supported the Secretary-General's recommendation in his report (A/52/502) that an office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights should be opened in Priština, and that there should be an increased presence of other international organizations. He also welcomed the efforts of the European Union and the United States in Kosova, and appealed to the international community to apply the necessary pressure so that the mission of long duration of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe could be permitted to return to Kosova.

29. **Mr. Najem** (Lebanon) noted that Lebanon had enacted human rights legislation. Human rights, however, must inevitably be violated when one country occupied another, and Israel had been occupying southern Lebanon and the Western Bekaa since 1978, ignoring United Nations resolutions calling for its withdrawal. In blatant disregard of the Charter, the principles of international law and the fourth Geneva Convention, it was detaining inhabitants of those areas in harsh conditions in military camps without charge or trial, using internationally outlawed weapons such as cluster bombs and dumdum bullets to kill innocent people, destroying vital facilities and demolishing villages and towns. He urged the international community to assume its responsibilities by putting a stop to such cruel and unlawful practices. Israel, like other States, was bound by international law and United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which called for its immediate and unconditional withdrawal from the occupied areas of Lebanon.

30. **Ms. Samé** (Cameroon) said that human rights were inherent to peace, security, economic prosperity and social equity, and the United Nations had established an appropriate legal arsenal ensuring respect for those rights. Her delegation welcomed the activities of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to promote public awareness and implementation of and respect for international human rights instruments.

31. It was widely recognized in the international community that human rights were fundamental to good governance. As the new millennium approached, democratization and respect for human rights were making progress in all parts of the world. Her delegation hoped that universal respect for those rights would be achieved as quickly as possible, so that the world could justly be called a civilized one. Almost all Governments, including that of Cameroon, had established legal frameworks guaranteeing respect for human rights and democracy. The Constitution of Cameroon affirmed its attachment to the fundamental principles contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Charter of the United Nations. Cameroon was also a party to almost all international human rights instruments. The coexistence of several political parties, free media and trade unions, as well as non-governmental organizations and other institutions reflected the determination of the Government and people of Cameroon to promote human rights and democracy.

32. Her Government's efforts should be encouraged through adequate international support. Her Government would welcome increased cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Cameroon would welcome the opportunity to host a centre for the promotion of human rights and democracy in central Africa.

33. The international community must increase its efforts and vigilance to ensure that the new millennium would see a world in which human rights were universally respected. To that end, human rights treaty bodies should be strengthened and their functioning should be improved. Her delegation supported the proposal for a merger of the Office of the High Commissioner with the Centre for Human Rights.

34. **Mr. Kapanga** (Democratic Republic of the Congo) said that his delegation wished to respond to the report of the

Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Zaire (now Democratic Republic of the Congo) (A/52/496).

35. His delegation regretted the statement made by the Special Rapporteur at the 33rd meeting, which had been made in the full knowledge of the delicate situation in the country. He reminded the international community that his Government had rejected Mr. Robert Garretón as the Special Rapporteur to investigate the alleged massacres in the eastern part of the country. That rejection had been accepted by the Secretary-General, who had decided to appoint his own team. The latter was currently in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and would investigate the alleged massacres, as well as any human rights violations since 1993. His Government expected that team to be in a position to establish the truth, which was that the forces of the current Government had never committed any massacres of innocent refugees.

36. The reasons which had led his Government to request that Mr. Garretón and his team should be removed from the investigation included the fact that Mr. Garretón, before ever setting foot on the country's territory, had already made statements accusing the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire of having massacred thousands of refugees. For an impartial investigator, such prejudice was totally unacceptable. The subsequent reports of the Special Rapporteur had relied heavily on statements made by members of the previous regime, accusing the Alliance forces of having committed massacres.

37. Mr. Garretón had spent only one day in Goma, in the eastern part of the country; he had never visited a "massacre site", seen a pit full of bodies or bones, or talked with any witnesses, and yet he had written a detailed report providing specific names of places where massacres were presumed to have occurred. However, he had made basic mistakes in naming those places, including errors as to the regions in which particular places were located. Such errors seemed to suggest that the investigator had not known what he was doing, or had never been in the area and had relied on reports emanating from those opposed to the Alliance forces.

38. The conclusions drawn by the Special Rapporteur were speculative in nature, rather than being based on any convincing empirical evidence. It seemed that most of his information had been derived from people who were outside the country, and who could be none other than the lackeys of the former Zairian dictator who were currently hiding in various cities throughout the world. For the Special Rapporteur to rely on the testimony of those perpetrators of genocide was an insult to the members of the world community.

39. The Special Rapporteur had failed to mention that many of the deaths had been caused by the use of innocent refugees as human shields by the forces opposed to the Alliance. He had also failed to mention that thousands of refugees who had wanted to return to Rwanda had been killed by their extremist fellow countrymen who had held them hostage in camps for two and a half years. Many of the refugees who had died had been armed refugees, and there was no provision in international law allowing the presence of armed refugees in refugee camps.

40. It was cynical for Mr. Garretón to compare the 32 years of hell that the Congolese people had experienced during the previous regime to the six months of the current Government; the latter was bent on improving the lives of the people, reconstructing the country's infrastructure, and improving the health-care and education systems, which had been neglected for the previous 32 years of maniacal dictatorship. Under that regime, millions of women, children and older persons had died because of the lack of food or health care, and many children had grown up without access to education. Those problems constituted the legacy of the previous regime, which his Government was desperately trying to overcome, and it had been unfair and insulting of the Special Rapporteur to make such comparisons.

41. He said it had been ironic for the Special Rapporteur to have stated that the Government had failed to take measures to guarantee the rights of the people, when the international community had effectively deprived them of their rights to food, medicine and education by tying reconstruction aid to the inquiry into the alleged massacres. The Government had put in place a reconstruction programme that would improve the lives of the people once the necessary funds had been obtained.

42. His Government was more inclusive than ever, with many members of parties or groups other than the Democratic Alliance for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (AFDL) among its senior officials. In a major step toward implementing a democratic system, the President had also appointed a commission to draft a Constitution. However, the help of the international community was needed to create the prerequisites for political stability — economic growth, job creation and an increase in family buying-power.

43. The statement by the Special Rapporteur was unhelpful and appeared designed to jeopardize if not sabotage the efforts of the United Nations and Governments to assist democratization in his country. His delegation requested that the Special Rapporteur should withdraw his statement in the interest of preserving that process; it also categorically rejected all allegations contained in the report. His

Government noted with regret that the timing of the report's submission appeared to have influenced the results of the inquiry, thereby casting doubt on the achievements of the Commission of Inquiry. His Government also regretted that account had not been taken of such positive factors in the country's general situation as the improvement in the security situation, the continuing fight against corruption, the setting up of the constitutional commission and of several social affairs offices, and the freedom of the press.

44. **Mr. Hettiarachchi** (Sri Lanka) said that his Government had established an independent national human rights commission with investigative, monitoring and advisory powers, and also that it had ratified the first Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. In an attempt to address minority grievances, constitutional changes providing for the devolution of power and the strengthening of existing guarantees regarding fundamental rights and freedoms had recently been submitted to Parliament.

45. Sri Lanka had consistently supported the right to development and related economic, social and cultural rights. The complex process of protecting and promoting human rights, good governance and accountability in an environment of underdevelopment, violence and terrorism should be carefully developed and resolutely moved forward.

46. Sri Lanka strongly believed that international action to enforce human rights should be even-handed; human rights should never be used as a pretext by powerful States to bully weaker ones for political reasons. The essence of peace and development was the ability of each human being to enjoy improved standards of life in expanded freedom.

47. His Government expressed its appreciation of the work of the outgoing Commissioner for Human Rights, and welcomed the new High Commissioner; it believed that she would fairly and open-mindedly strive to win the trust of developing countries.

48. **Ms. Foo Chi Hsia** (Singapore) said that Singapore was a multiracial and multi-religious society, and that the right of its citizens to practice their religion freely was enshrined in the Constitution. The Government was committed to maintaining racial and religious harmony, and would remain firm in dealing with elements threatening that harmony. Singaporeans from all walks of life took responsibility to cultivate a culture of tolerance and respect for the religious beliefs of all groups. They also recognized that, for such a society to function, its members must be able to enjoy each other's company, customs and practices while remaining distinct and respecting each other's separate identities.

49. However, the right of freedom of worship could not be absolute and unqualified. Singapore believed that such a right must be reconciled with the need to uphold the law of the State. The right of the sovereign power to maintain peace, security and social order through a system of laws for the wider interests of society had to take precedence, but that right had to be applied impartially to all religions and groups. Singapore hoped that the Special Rapporteur on religious tolerance would continue to take cognizance of that fundamental principle in carrying out his future work.

50. **Mr. Mekdad** (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, expressed his delegation's surprise at the references to his country in the statement made at the previous meeting by the representative of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union regarding human rights. The Syrian Arab Republic placed special importance on guaranteeing the full enjoyment of economic, social, political and cultural rights of the individual. Its Constitution accorded supremacy to the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary.

51. The treatment of prisoners in the Syrian Arab Republic was comparable to that in other countries, including those in the European Union; the law punished officials who mistreated prisoners or detainees. The free expression of opinion and constructive criticism as well as the freedom of assembly were provided for under the Constitution; all those held in Syrian prisons had been convicted on the basis of conclusive evidence. Moreover, prisoners could be released on parole for good behaviour, and the President of the Republic occasionally declared general amnesties as well.

52. Syria was committed to steady democratization consistent with international norms and instruments. Elections to Parliament and local councils were held regularly. A referendum would also be held within a few months to allow the people to express their views regarding the Presidency of the Republic. Numerous mass organizations also operated freely in the country.

53. Rather than politicizing the issue of human rights, the authors of the European Union statement should deal with massive violations of human rights and avoid singling out only developing countries for scrutiny regarding their human rights situations.

54. **Mr. Al-Sudairy** (Saudi Arabia), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that, in its references to Saudi Arabia, the statement of the European Union reflected no attempt to understand the Islamic legal code known as the Shariah, which was the foundation of the Kingdom's Government. Under the Shariah, the rights of women were guaranteed in full, and religious tolerance was exercised in

regard to non-Muslims in the Kingdom. All citizens of the Kingdom were Muslims, however, and were obliged to abide by the Shariah laws; the Government was obliged to enforce those laws and to maintain public order.

55. *Mr. Busacca (Italy), resumed the Chair.*

56. **Mr. Abba Kourou** (Niger), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, responded to the concerns regarding press freedom in his country expressed in the statement of the European Union by saying that the press law in the Niger was not aimed at stifling criticism of the Government. He assured the European Union that his Government was committed to the opening of frank dialogue with the opposition.

57. **Mr. Al-Humaimidi** (Iraq), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that his delegation rejected all the slanderous and false allegations made by the representative of Luxembourg speaking on behalf of the European Union concerning the human rights situation in Iraq. That statement was nothing more than a repetition of a political position and had nothing to do with human rights. Iraq intended to comply with all its human rights commitments under the international instruments to which it was a party and would submit its reports to the relevant monitoring bodies. The European Union should consider the effects of the economic sanctions imposed on his country in order to have a more balanced position on the situation.

58. The United States of America insisted on maintaining those economic sanctions, which had a very harmful effect on the entire population of Iraq. The United States was preventing the import of certain basic goods into Iraq and impeding the delivery of food and medicine to all areas of the country, thereby violating the human rights of the Iraqi people.

59. **Mr. Rodriguez-Parrilla** (Cuba), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the States members of the European Union had accused more than 30 developing countries of human rights violations while forgetting their own colonial sins. The European Union seemed to wish to impose democracy through economic warfare and political pressure in an attempt to compel the entire world to copy a model that was supposedly full of virtues but was based on the commercialization of political life, the corruption of public officials, and the buying and selling of candidates and votes.

60. Moreover, the United States had, for almost 40 years, conducted a hostile policy against Cuba based on direct aggression, mercenary and terrorist operations, and a protracted economic blockade. Yet it had increased its defence spending by $58 billion and had left 4.7 million elderly people without health care. Thirty million United States citizens, most of whom were children, had no medical insurance coverage. It was a country where police brutality was a common phenomenon; there had been more than 2,000 cases of police brutality in its financial capital in 1997 alone. Because of the racial discrimination in the United States, the average family income for blacks was far lower than that for whites. It had the highest suicide rate among young people in the industrialized countries. Such a country could not set itself up as a model for others to follow.

61. **Mr. Choe Myong Nam** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that he categorically rejected the statement made at the previous meeting by the representative of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union concerning his country. The allegations put forward in that statement were a blatant act of interference in his country's internal affairs and showed disregard for the right of its people to choose their own political and economic system, which genuinely guaranteed their rights and freedoms.

62. All the countries alluded to by the European Union were developing countries. The Union, however, had never been honest enough to criticize human rights violations in its member States and associated countries. That was very regrettable, because racial discrimination, unemployment, crime, violent xenophobia and neo-Nazism were prevalent in those countries as a result of the nature of their social systems. Furthermore, the economic growth and prosperity advocated by the European Union had been achieved by violating the sovereignty and human rights of the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

63. **Mr. Otuyelu** (Nigeria), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the European Union and the United States had expressed concern about the alleged slow pace of his country's transition to civilian rule. That position did not reflect the real state of affairs in Nigeria. According to the timetable for the re-establishment of democratic government agreed upon by all political parties, federal elections would take place in October 1998. Local elections had already occurred in Nigeria and elections to state government would be held in December 1997. All political parties and all eligible voters would be able to participate. Contrary to what had been said by the United States representative, there was no political exclusion or intimidation in Nigeria. All eligible Nigerian citizens were freely able to vote and stand for election.

64. **Mr. Byamugisha** (Uganda), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that it was rather cynical for the

Sudanese delegation to state that it was cooperating in efforts to trace the whereabouts of the Ugandan children abducted by the rebel resistance army supported by the Sudanese Government. Between 4,000 and 7,000 Ugandan children had been abducted by rebels in northern Uganda and forced into military service. Held in camps in the Sudan, they were subjected to unimaginable horrors and were tortured or killed if they attempted to escape. Young girls, some of whom were hardly 12 years of age, were sexually abused and distributed among the rebel commanders as wives. The children were forced to carry arms, equipment and looted property over long distances. In the hope that common decency would prevail, Uganda appealed to the Sudanese Government, friendly countries, the Secretary-General and the Security Council to ensure the return of those children to their families.

65. **Mr. Xie Bohua** (China) said that he categorically rejected the statements made by the United States and the European Union criticizing China without reason. Assuming the position of human rights judges, they took it upon themselves to accuse developing countries of violations. However, they failed to mention their own serious human rights problems and followed a double standard in that field. That was a regrettable situation and effective measures should be taken to correct it.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.